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## JEREMIAH.

BY PROF. C. H. CORNILL.

PROPHECY did not experience at once the disastrous consequences of the priestly reforms of 621, but displayed at this period its noblest offshoot in Jeremiah. It is impossible to suppose that Jeremiah had anything to do with either the composition or introduction of Deuteronomy. The rather elaborate account given of the proceedings of this period in the Book of Kings makes no mention of him, and the mental relationship which some have claimed to exist between Jeremiah and Deuteronomy is based on passages of this book which did not belong to the law-code of 621, but are later than Jeremiah, and the direct outcome of his influence.

As the Kingdom of Israel on its downfall bore in Hosea its noblest prophetic fruit, so in the time immediately preceding the destruction of Judah we find the sublime figure of Jeremiah. Mentally, also, these two men were closely related. Sentiment is the predominant characteristic of each. Both have the same tender and sympathetic heart; both have the same elegiac bent of mind; both were pre-eminently devout men. The religious element preponderates entirely over the ethical. It can be proved that Jeremiah was powerfully influenced by Hosea, and that he looked upon him as his prototype.

We are better informed concerning the life and fortunes of Jeremiah than of any other prophet. He received his call to the prophetic office in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign, namely, in 627. He must have been at the time very young, as he hesitated to obey the divine order on the ground of his youth. We are referred, therefore, to the later years of the reign of King Manasseh, as the period of the prophet's birth. Jeremiah was not a native of Jerusalem; his home was Anathoth, a small village near Jerusalem. He came of a priestly family, and we get the impression that he did not live in poor circumstances. Solomon had banished to his estate in Anathoth, Abiathar, the high-priest of David, and the last remaining heir of the old priesthood of Shiloh. The conjecture is not rash, perhaps, that Jeremiah was a descendant of this family, which could cherish and preserve the proudest and dearest recollections of Israel as family traditions.

The family was descended from Moses. Abiathar had been closely attached to David's person and throne; he had given the religious sanction to all David's mighty deeds, and it was he who helped to found Jerusalem as also to be the first to worship there the God of Israel. How vividly such traditions are wont to be fostered in fallen families is well known, and, besides, Jeremiah shows himself to be thoroughly acquainted with the past history of Israel. Moses and Samuel, Amos and Hosea, they were the men with whom and in whom he lived. No other prophet is so steeped in the ancient literature and history of Israel. Everything that was noble and worthy in Israel was known and familiar to him. We see in this the fruits of a careful education, and can readily imagine how the priestly father or pious mother filled the impressionable heart of the child with what was most sacred to them.

Jeremiah himself mentions his debt to his parents, where God says to him in the vision: "Before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified and ordained thee a prophet." Which means: A person born of such parents is, of necessity, consecrated to God.

And still another circumstance is of utmost importance. Jeremiah is the scion of a martyred church. He was born at a time when Manasseh persecuted the prophets with fire and sword, and raged against their whole party. Persecution, however, only serves to fan religion into a more intense flame. With what fervor do men then pray; with what strength they believe and confide, wait and hope. Under such circumstances was Jeremiah born. Under such impressions he grew up. Truly, he was a predestined personality.

In Jeremiah prophecy appears in a totally new and distinct stamp, noticeable even in his first calling in the year 627. God says to Jeremiah: "See I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, to build and to plant." So thoroughly does the prophet feel himself one with Him who sent him, and fancy his own personality identical with God. Likewise, in one of the grandest passages of his book it is he who causes all the nations to drink of the wine-cup of God's fury. And thus the whole life of the prophet is absorbed in his calling. He must even deny himself the joys of matrimony and of home. Solitary and forlorn he must

wander through life, belonging only to God and to his vocation.

It is my duty to state, so as not to draw on myself the charge of false embellishment, that this consciousness of absolute union with God often assumes in Jeremiah a form which has for us something offensive in it. His enemies are also God's enemies, and this otherwise tender and gentle man calls down upon them the heaviest curses: "Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of throttling." But he is conscious himself that this is something incongruous. In one of his most remarkable passages, where he has broken out into the direst imprecations and cursed himself and the day of his birth, God answers him: "If thou becomest again mine, thou mayest again be my servant, and if thou freest thy better self from the vile, then shalt thou still be as my mouth."

Jeremiah did indeed free his better self from the vile, and such passing outbreaks only make him dearer to us and render him more human, as showing us what this man inwardly suffered, how he struggled, and under what afflictions his prophecy arose. The sorrow he bears is twofold: personal, in that he preaches to deaf ears and only reaps hate in return for his love; and general, as a member of his people. For as the prophet knows himself to be in his vocation one with God, so does he know himself as a man to be one with his people, whose grief he bears with a double burden, whose destiny is like to break his heart.

"My bowels, my bowels, I am pained to my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war."

Thus he exclaims in one place, and in another we read:

"O that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!"

Out of this peculiar and twofold position of the prophet between God and his people Jeremiah drew the practical inference that he was the chosen advocate and intercessor of the nation with God; in his fervent prayers he fairly battles with God for the salvation of his people. This is a totally new feature. The relation of the former prophets to their contemporaries was that of mere preachers of punishment and repentance. Jeremiah, however, in spite of their unworthiness, holds his fellow-countrymen lovingly in his heart and endeavors to arrest the arm of God, already uplifted to deal on them the destructive blow. God at last must all but rebuff his unwearying and impetuous prophet.

The prophetic preaching of Jeremiah naturally often rests on that of his predecessors, out of which it

organically grew. But it is curious to see, and this is noticeable even in the smallest details, how everything is spiritualised and deepened in Jeremiah, and in a certain measure transposed to a higher key. Often it is a mere descriptive word, or characteristic expression, which makes old thoughts appear new, and stamps them as the mental property of Jeremiah. I must forego the proof of this in detail, and limit myself in this brief sketch to what is specifically new in Jeremiah, and to what constitutes his substantial importance and position in the history of Israelitic prophecy and religion.

Now, the specifically new in Jeremiah touches directly the kernel and substance of religion. Jeremiah was the first to set religion consciously free from all extraneous and material elements, and to establish it on a purely spiritual basis. God himself will destroy His temple in Jerusalem, and at the time of the final salvation, it shall not be built up again, and the Holiest of Holies, the ark of the covenant, will not be missed, and none new made. What God requires of man is something different: man shall break up his fallow ground and not sow among thorns; he shall circumcise his heart. God considers only the purity of the heart, its prevalent disposition; it is he who "tries the heart and the reins"—an expression originally coined by Jeremiah, and which we meet with in his book for the first time. Truth and obedience are good in themselves, as denoting a moral disposition.

There was a sect, the Rechabites, who abstained from drinking wine. Jeremiah knew well that the Kingdom of God was not eating and drinking, and that the goodness and worth of man in God's sight did not depend on whether he drank wine or not. Nevertheless, he praises these Rechabites, and holds them up to the people as an example of piety and faith. Jeremiah goes indeed further than this. He is the first to affirm in clear and plain words, that the gods of the heathen are not real beings, but merely imaginative creations of the minds of their worshippers. Yet he holds up to his people the heathen who serve their false and meaningless religion with genuine faith and sincere devotion, as models and examples which put them to shame. They are really more pleasing to God than a people who have the true God, but are unmindful and forgetful of Him. And this is a sin for which there is no excuse, for the knowledge of God is inborn in man. As the bird of passage knoweth the time of his departure and the object of its wandering, so is the longing for God born in man; he has only to follow after that yearning of his heart as the animal after its instinct, and this craving must lead him to God. And this will also be in the end of time when God concludes a new covenant with Israel: then has every man the law of God written in his heart; he has only to consult his



heart and to follow after its directions. Now, if religion, or, as Jeremiah calls it, the knowledge of God, is born in man, then there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, and this grand thought Jeremiah first recognised:

“O Lord, . . . the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth and shall say, Our fathers have inherited only lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit. Can a man make gods unto himself, that are not gods?” And when the Gentiles then learn from converted Israel to worship the true God, as they themselves taught Israel to offer sacrifices to idols, then they, too, will enter into the future kingdom of God.

The ideality and universality of religion—they are the two new grand apprehensions which Jeremiah has given to the world. Every man as such is born a child of God. He does not become such through the forms of any definite religion, or outward organisation, but he becomes such in his heart, through circumcision of the heart and of the ears. A pure heart and a pure mind are all that God requires of man, let his piety choose what form it will, so long as it is genuine. Thus we have in Jeremiah the purest and highest consummation of the prophecy of Israel and of the religion of the Old Testament. After him One only could come, who was greater than he.

But we must now pass on to a consideration of the life and fortunes of Jeremiah, for in them are reflected the fortunes of his people and age.

In the early days of his vocation as a prophet, Jeremiah seems to have worked very quietly. For the first five years, during the occurrence of the extremely important events enacted at Jerusalem in connexion with Deuteronomy, nobody took the slightest notice of him. Perhaps he was still living in his native village of Anathoth. We know from his own accounts that he labored there, as also that he was the object of a rancorous persecution, which aimed at his life. It is possible that it was this that induced him to settle in Jerusalem.

Of his work during the reign of Josiah we know nothing definite. Only one short speech of the collection in his book is expressly ascribed to this time. In fact, we are told nothing of Josiah himself, after the famous reform, except the manner of his death. The second half of his reign must have been on the whole happy and propitious for Judah. The Seythian storm had raged across it without causing much severe damage. The power of Assyria was smitten and had entirely disappeared in the outlying regions. Josiah could rule over Israel as if it were his own land, and in a measure restore the kingdom of David.

But events pursued their uninterruptible course. In the year 608 Nineveh was surrounded by the allied

Medes and Chaldeans, and its fall was only a question of time. The Egyptian Pharaoh Necho held this to be a fitting opportunity to secure for himself his portion of the heritage of Assyria. He set forth with a huge army from the Nile, to occupy on behalf of the Egyptian kingdom the whole country up to the Euphrates. What moved Josiah to oppose him we do not know. A disastrous engagement took place at Megiddo, where Josiah was completely defeated and mortally wounded. This was for the religious party in Israel a terrible blow. Josiah, the first king pleasing to God, had met a dreadful end. He had served God faithfully and honestly, and now God had abandoned him. Could not some mistake have been made as to God's power, or as to His justice? And indeed after this event a change does really seem to have taken place in the religious views.

Jehoiakim, Josiah's eldest son, who now ruled as an Egyptian vassal, was not a man after the heart of the prophet; in him Manasseh lived anew. He also persecuted the prophets. He ordered one of them named Urijah to be executed, and Jeremiah himself was in constant danger of losing his life. Whether the reform of the cultus ordered by Josiah was revoked, we do not know; in any event Jehoiakim took no interest in it, and in no wise supported it. Under him the temporal arm of the church was not available. And now, just at the beginning of his reign, Jeremiah appears with the awful prophecy, at that time doubly monstrous and blasphemous, that temple and city would be both destroyed if a radical improvement and thorough conversion did not take place. Violent scenes arose in the temple; the death of the obnoxious prophet was clamorously called for. He was saved only with difficulty, and it seems was forbidden to enter the temple and to preach there.

In the year 606 Nineveh fell after a three years' siege, and thus disappeared the kingdom and nation of the Assyrians from the face of the earth. The Medes and Chaldeans divided the spoils among them. Now, however, they had another task on their hands. A third competitor was to be driven out of the field. Pharaoh Necho had actually occupied the whole country up to the Euphrates. Accordingly, in 605, a year after the fall of Nineveh, the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar marched against him. The battle took place at Carchemish and Necho was totally defeated. The Egyptian hosts rolled back in wild flight to their homes and the whole country as far as the confines of Egypt fell into Nebuchadnezzar's hands.

In this critical year, 605, Jeremiah received God's command's to write down in a book all the words which he had hitherto spoken, and at the end of the book we find the vision of the cup of wrath, which the prophet was to cause all nations and peoples to drink, for now

through the Chaldeans God's judgment is fulfilled over the whole earth. Jehoiakim felt the seriousness of the situation. A general fast was ordered, and seizing the occasion Jeremiah caused his young friend and pupil Baruch to read his book of prophecies aloud in the temple. The King heard of it, ordered the book to be read to him, had it cut into pieces and cast into the fire. He ordered the arrest of Jeremiah and Baruch, but they managed to keep out of the way.

Thus Jehoiakim was converted from an Assyrian into a Babylonian vassal, and Jeremiah incessantly urged upon him the necessity of bending his neck to the yoke of the King of Babel. For Nebuchadnezzar was the servant, the chosen weapon of God, appointed by Him to rule over the earth. Natural prudence and insight alone would have recommended this policy as the only right and possible one; for by it relative quiet and peace were assured to the nation. But Jehoiakim did not think so. He arose against the King of Babel, and a storm now brewed around Jerusalem. Jehoiakim himself did not survive the catastrophe, but his son Jehoiachin was compelled to surrender unconditionally to the Babylonians. Nebuchadnezzar led the king captive to Babylon, where he was kept in close bondage, together with ten thousand of his people, the entire aristocracy of birth and intellect; nothing remained but the lower classes. He set the third son of Josiah, Zedekiah, as vassal king over this decimated and enfeebled people.

All this happened in the year 597.

Better days now began for Jeremiah. Zedekiah resembled his father Josiah; he evidently held the prophet in high esteem, and seemed not indisposed to be guided by him. But he had to reckon here with the wishes of the people and with public opinion, and they tended the other way. The sadder the situation and the more dangerous the circumstances became, the higher flared the fanaticism, which was fanned into a flame by other prophets. Here we encounter those biassed and indiscriminating disciples of Isaiah, who, with their boasts of the indestructibility of Jerusalem and the temple, were never weary of assuring the people of divine protection, and of urging them to shake off the detested yoke of the Gentiles.

In the fourth year of the reign of Zedekiah a powerful and widespread agitation seems to have broken out. Ambassadors from all the smaller nations and peoples round about gathered in Jerusalem to plan some scheme of concerted action against Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah appears in their midst with a yoke around his neck. It is the will of God that all the nations should bow their necks beneath the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, lest a heavier judgment should fall upon them. One of the false prophets, Hananiah, took the yoke from off the neck of Jeremiah and broke it, say-

ing: "Even so will the Lord break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all the nations within the space of two full years." Then said Jeremiah to him: "Thou hast broken the yokes of wood; but in their stead shall come yokes of iron." It was predicted Hananiah should die in that year, for having prophesied falsely in the name of God. And Hananiah died in the seventh month. Finally, nothing definite came of the deliberations, and the nations remained quiet. But even the exiles in Babylon, who were also greatly excited and stirred up by false prophets, had to be warned by Jeremiah to peace and resignation in the will of God. He did this in a letter, which must have been written at the same time with the events above-mentioned.

Of the next five years we know nothing. But adversity takes rapid strides, and now the destiny of Jerusalem was about to be fulfilled. Confiding in the help of Egypt, Zedekiah rebelled against his suzerain and for a second time the Babylonian armies marched against Jerusalem. Zedekiah sent to consult the prophet as to the future. Jeremiah remained firm in his opinion—subjection to the King of Babylon. Whosoever shall go forth against the Chaldeans shall not escape out of their hands, and whosoever shall remain in the city shall die through the sword, hunger, and pestilence, but the city shall be consumed with fire. The people did not listen to him; passion had blinded and rendered them foolish. The siege began. The Egyptians, however, kept their promise. Egyptian troops poured in, and Nebuchadnezzar raised the siege.

The joy in Jerusalem knew no bounds. But unfortunately these days of rejoicing and confidence were darkened by a disgraceful breach of faith. The necessities of the siege had suggested the revival of an ancient custom, by which the Hebrew slaves were set free after six years' service. To obtain warriors willing to fight during the siege, the Hebrew slaves had been solemnly liberated, but now that all danger was over, they were compelled to return to servitude. The enraged prophet hurled his most terrible words at the heads of this faithless and perjured people, but in so doing he made enemies among the ruling classes, who, as he was about to set forth to his birthplace Anathoth, caused him to be arrested, on the pretence that he intended to go over to the Chaldeans; he was beaten and put into prison. But his prophecy was right. The Chaldeans returned, and the siege began anew. That was for Jeremiah a time of affliction. Hated, ill-treated, persecuted by all as a betrayer of his country, he passed several weeks and months of unutterable misery. To the energetic mediation of King Zedekiah he owed his life.

We can now understand, perhaps, the moods which



caused him to curse his birth and to murmur against God, who had only suffered him to be born for misery and wretchedness, hatred and enmity.

But soon the fate of Jerusalem was fulfilled. After being defended with the wild courage of despair, it was finally captured on the ninth of July, 536. This time Nebuchadnezzar showed no mercy. Zedekiah had his eyes put out and was carried in chains to Babylon, after all his children had been murdered in his sight. The city and temple were plundered, burnt with fire, and utterly destroyed, and almost the entire population carried away captive into Babylon. Only a few of the poor of the land were left behind for vine-dressers and for husbandmen. As Babylonian viceroy over this miserable remnant, with a residence in Mizpah, was appointed Gedaliah, a grandson of Shaphan, the scribe who had delivered Deuteronomy to King Josiah.

Jeremiah, who had survived all the terrors and sufferings of the siege and capture, and whom the Chaldeans had left in Judah, remained with Gedaliah, whose father, Ahikam had been a warm friend and supporter of the prophet. And now that his prophecies soared to their sublimest heights and he had just predicted on the ruins of Jerusalem and of the temple, God's everlasting covenant of grace with Israel, he would, perhaps, have still enjoyed a successful activity, had not a band of fanatics with a prince of the royal blood at their head, treacherously attacked and slain Gedaliah and such Chaldeans as were with him. Jeremiah still counselled quiet. Nebuchadnezzar would not visit the crime of a few on the whole nation. But the people would not trust him; they arose and went into Egypt and forced the aged prophet to accompany them.

In Egypt the prophet closed a life full of suffering. Bitter contentions arose with his countrymen. Jeremiah still fearlessly discharged his office as incarnate conscience of his people, and was, according to a Jewish tradition, stoned to death by an infuriated mob.

Thus, breathed out his great soul Jeremiah, solitary and alone on Egyptian soil under the blows of his own people, for whom during his whole lifetime he had striven and suffered, and from whom, for all his love and faith, he had but reaped hatred and persecution. Truly he drank the cup of suffering to its dregs. But undismayed and dauntless, he fell in his harness, a true soldier of the truth. He had become as an iron wall, and as pillars of brass against the whole land. They had struggled against him, but not overcome him. He fell as a hero, as a conqueror; he could die for the truth, he could not abjure it.

Jerusalem destroyed, its greatest son buried in the sands of Egypt, the people dragged as captives into Babylon—what was now to become of Israel? Here

was the opportunity for Deuteronomy to prove itself true, and it did prove true. It saved Israel and religion. And to this end prophecy also helped much. If the songs of the Lord were silent in a strange land, and Israel weeping hung her harps on the willows by the waters of Babylon—yet prophecy was not silent. It found during the exile in Babylon two of its truest and spiritually most powerful exponents.

### LIFE.

BY WILHELMINE DARROW.

Out of the dusk, the shadows of night,  
Out of the shadows the birth of light.

Out of that light, the life-giving flame,  
Out of that light the spirit came,  
Out of that light the perfect plan  
From the blade of grass to the crown of man.

In the dawn of life earth held thee,  
As a mother her nestling at her knee.

As the climbing moon the sea-tides drew,  
So fuller and higher thy summit grew,—  
From the sun-fed blossoms of childhood's plains  
The upland path as manhood gains.

When darkness comes it means but rest  
To lie for a while on earth's brown breast,

And out of the dust to live again  
In the oak tree's strength or the waving grain;  
A cunning fragment of the alchemist's art,  
Or to nestle close to a human heart.

Tho' marred by time, tho' tempest tossed  
What has been never can be lost.

Of broader brow, of keener view  
Thy children thine upward race pursue.

In the songs thy mother sang to thee,  
The spirit-age of a nation see,  
Deeds of thine in earlier days  
Shall be the theme of minstrel-lays.

The spirit of the scholar lies enfolded in the scroll,  
The deeds of man the living soul.

### THE AMERICAN CONGRESS OF LIBERAL RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES.

THE second session of the American Congress of Liberal Religious Societies, held in Chicago on June 4, 5, and 6, has been successful in bringing together a number of liberal thinkers who are full of hopes for building grander religious mansions for mankind. There were all shades of religious and philosophical thought represented, and problems were discussed that are now in the minds of many serious, inquiring people. But we cannot say that the word of solution has been pronounced. On the very last day of the Congress I was asked by a stranger of the audience, "Can you not tell me what is the main intention of the Congress?" "Did you not hear the speeches of the preceding days?" I retorted. And my questioner replied: "I attended all the sessions, but I cannot make out what the Congress means to accomplish, and how they will bring about a closer relation among the various

denominations. Are they limited to Unitarians, Universalists, Jews, and Ethical Culturists, and what do they intend to do together? We feel that something ought to be done, but in these divergencies of opinion we are at a loss to know what can be done."

This expression of public sentiment appeared to me very characteristic. The Congress contains great possibilities, but the main thing is yet lacking,—purpose and definite direction. The agreement of the Liberals is so far only negative. There was a general denunciation of dogmatic religion, there was an eagerness for acquiring more breadth, a tendency towards Universalism ready to sink all sectarianism in world-wide generalities. This tendency, however, was opposed by some calmer minds, especially by the Jews, who had come to the Congress, not for the sake of dropping Judaism, but because they felt that the very principle of their religion gave them liberty of thought and allowed them to seek fellowship with others.

In the absence of Dr. Thomas, the President, Rabbi Hirsch opened the Congress. He introduced several speakers, among them W. L. Sheldon of St. Louis, the Rev. Joseph Stolz of Chicago, the Rev. Dr. J. M. Pullman, Universalist, of Lynn, Mass. Sheldon's conception of liberalism was that of the ethical culture societies, which was identical with subjectivism. He said that he did not come to change the religion of others. He wanted the Roman Catholic to remain a Roman Catholic, the Presbyterian a Presbyterian, the Unitarian a Unitarian, while he stuck to his conception, which was the truth *to him*. He said: "If any one would offer me a solution which claims to have solved the problem I would say: You have no Gospel for me, for the key to the religious problem has been lost. There will always remain the various religions which we have now, or analogous forms, so long as the world stands. One makes this idea or aspiration prominent, while others urge the importance of other ideas. To me duty is the highest religion. To let every one have the liberty of his own conviction is to me the gist of liberalism." Mr. Sheldon was much applauded for his remarks, and there is no doubt that he voiced the sentiment of perhaps the majority of the audience.

After him spoke Rabbi Stolz, claiming that Judaism, the most ancient religion, was still the most modern. That he did not come to surrender his views, but to uphold them, in the confidence that they could stand the test of time. Dr. Pullman spoke very eloquently for Universalism, while the Rev. F. E. Dewhurst represented the Independents.

The subject of these opening addresses was "The Tendency to Unite the Things Held in Common and the Things We Can Do Together." The impression which the various speeches made did not afford the satisfaction of attaining to a closer union, and we would suggest here that if liberalism is what Mr. Sheldon represents it, viz., Agnosticism and Subjectivism, the American Congress of Liberal Religious Societies will never accomplish anything worth talking about. Mr. Sheldon says that to him duty is the highest religion, but is not the performance of duty to everybody of whatever denomination he may be the highest religion? The trouble is to find a test-stone of duty. While the Roman Catholic allows himself to be guided by the directions of his ecclesiastical superiors and the Pope, the Protestant relies on the Bible, and the Ethical Culturist on his conscience. But everybody believes in duty. The question is, Can we have a test of duty, or is duty simply a matter of individual preference? Is there a possibility of ascertaining and clearly defining the maxims of moral conduct, or is it a matter of taste, where various opinions may peacefully obtain one beside the other?

The solution of the problem as proposed by *The Open Court* would be that we have, indeed, a means of discovering the moral laws which should regulate our conduct, and while the names of the various denominations are of no account, while ceremonies, tra-

ditions, and symbols may vary, the gist of true religion can only be one, and must be the same under all conditions. The character of this cosmic religion is not indefinite, it is not a matter of taste, or personal preference, but it can be objectively determined and clearly defined. Man's relation to the All, the conditions from which he springs, the laws according to which his soul develops, the potentiality of further progress, the social relations of man to man, his duties to himself, to his fellow-beings, to his posterity, can be made the subject of inquiry; the whence and whither of man is not an insolvable problem. It is accessible to us. A solution is possible, if we only take the trouble to investigate with all necessary accuracy and circumspection. If we do not solve the whole problem at once, we can approach it gradually by resolving it into partial problems, and solving them one by one. In a word, science is applicable not only to lower nature, but also to higher nature. Science is not limited to mineralogy, chemistry, and zoölogy, but can be applied also to the problems of the human soul. The religious needs of man, his aspirations and ideals, too, can be subjected to scientific inquiry, and these most important facts of man's life are the well-springs of his religion. Religion, be it ever so misguided by superstitious notions, is deeply grounded in the nature of man, and only by a painstaking investigation of the facts from which religion springs can we solve the religious problem.

Here, then, if anywhere, is the ground upon which religious societies can come to an agreement, and indeed not only liberal religious societies, but all religious people, churches and individuals, liberal and illiberal, sectarian and unsectarian. Mere negations, such as undogmatic religion, non-sectarian churches, absolute mental liberty, which apparently is understood to mean pure subjectivism, will be an insufficient cement for a religious fellowship, and the limitation of the congress to "*liberal* religious societies" gives it an involuntary flavor of illiberality which is not desirable.

The objection may be made that if the Congress were not limited to liberal religious societies, dogmatic people might join them and obliterate the liberal character by outnumbering the original founders. But of this there would be no danger if the Congress adopted the principle that the facts of life ascertainable by experience, especially the higher spiritual experiences of the human heart, must be considered as the basis of religion, and that all problems have to be decided before the tribunal of science. Science must not be regarded as profane. Science is a religious revelation, and if the will of God becomes known anywhere it appears in the verdicts of science. This is a positive ground to stand on. The nature of science is objectivity. The truths of science are not vague generalities but definite, and these truths are not mere opinions but universal statements that can be proved. The nature of genuinely scientific statements is that they must be accepted by every one who investigates the subject. They can be revised and restated. They can be amended, corrected, and be rendered more and more accurate. Science indeed is the only catholic institution in the world, and if we want catholicity in religion we must fall back upon science.

The name American Congress of Liberal Religious Societies is ponderous, awkward, and inappropriate. Dr. Momerie of London proposed to change it into "The Liberal Congress of Religious Societies," and we would suggest simply "The American Religious Congress."

In order to make the Congress a success it would be desirable to have it conducted according to the plan and principles of the World's Parliament of Religions, which united men of the most different and even opposite convictions in a brotherly spirit, because the liberality of the Parliament was parliamentary and did not make any attempts to replace the definiteness of its sectarian members by vague generalities. If the American Congress



of Liberal Religious Societies were a Pan-Religious Congress affording to its members parliamentary liberty on the ground that whatever opinion can stand the test of scientific critique should have the right of survival, the new organisation would find a great field. It would then be truly liberal, could invite the most dogmatic churches to join, and would without fail purify the religious traditions from which we have to work out a nobler conception of God and man and the ethical duties of man.

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On Wednesday morning, June 5, the Congress heard the reports of the various committees, especially on missionary and publication work. The Rev. A. W. Gould's report was discussed by the Rev. A. N. Alcott of Elgin, Ill. The latter made some valuable remarks as to the policy of missionarising. He criticised the attempts to induce societies to change their names or to sink other sectarian peculiarities which are not antagonistic to federation and friendly fellowship. Dr. E. G. Hirsch made a report on a school of sociology and religion which he rightly declared to be a need of the time. He did not doubt if the plan were made in the right way, the money necessary for its foundation would be forthcoming.

Dr. Orello Cone, President of Buchtel College, spoke in the afternoon on "The Higher Criticism and Its Ethical Relations," and he was followed on the same subject by Dr. Hirsch. Both paid a glowing tribute to the noble efforts of the critics, and especially Dr. Hirsch waxed eloquent in his explanation of the deeply religious nature of the so-called higher criticism. The higher critics have taken the wind out of the sails of Ingersolism. They are the men who rescued the Bible from misinterpretation. They give back to us our sacred Scriptures which we had lost through the misconception of narrow-minded ignoramuses. The dust of centuries has settled upon them, defacing their original meaning and beauty and our critics are doing the work of a thorough housecleaning by which the original beauty is restored.

In the evening the Rev. George D. Herron of Iowa College, Grinnell, Iowa, spoke on "The Uses and Abuses of Wealth." It was a harangue in which the railroad companies and other great corporations were justly and unjustly attacked, and no remedy was offered to improve the present condition of things. We have no objection to radical views and to the proposition of new sociological theories, but we cannot help thinking that mere denunciations which smack of demagogism are out of place at a religious congress, and it is certain that the Rev. Herron did more harm to the cause of the Congress than any adversary of its cause could have accomplished. Dr. Momerie spoke on the same evening on "The Essentials of Religion." Although he belongs to the Episcopalian Church of England, famous for its dogmatic spirit, he did not spare the old dogmatic conception of religion which he represented as a species of bargain-making for gaining the favor of the deity through sacrifices and flattery.

The Rev. Arthur M. Judy of Davenport, Iowa, proposed in the session on Thursday morning a plan of federation between the various societies which, however, found no strong support in the discussion that followed. As his speech touches the main problem of the Congress, it is to be published in full in *Unity* together with an accurate report of the debate elicited by it.

The Rev. John Faville, Pastor of the Congregational Church, Appleton, Wis., spoke in the afternoon on "The Interchange of Ministerial Courtesies Across Theological Chasms." The rest of the time was filled by twenty-minute addresses on various subjects, among them one on Politics by the Rev. W. R. Lord of St. Paul, Minn., and one on The Public Schools by Col. F. W. Parker of Chicago. The latter's address was very impressive and as he spoke with great enthusiasm it served to kindle and intensify the popular interest for the importance of the educational problem through the instrumentality of our public schools.

The Standard Club of Chicago gave a brilliant reception to

the members and friends of the Congress Thursday evening, where the most prominent leaders of the Congress, Dr. Thomas, Dr. Jones, Dr. Hirsch, and a few guests, Dr. Momerie, Dr. Moses, and the Hon. Lyman Trumbull made valedictory addresses.

We repeat, the Congress has great potentialities but it will be indispensable for the new organisation to become more definite in its purpose and to define clearly the aims and methods of its aspirations.

P. C.

### BOOK NOTICES.

**THE POWER OF SILENCE.** An Interpretation of Life in Its Relation to Health and Happiness. By *Horatio W. Dresser*. Boston: George H. Ellis. Pages, 219. Price, \$1.50.

This book of two hundred and nineteen pages contains a philosophy of life based upon the experiences of Dr. P. P. Quimby, of Belfast, Maine. It is dedicated to the author's parents, who were long associated with Dr. Quimby. The main idea is to attain the right attitude in life by hushing the bustle of the world. There is too much writing upon the subject before a presentation of the substance is reached. Some good ideas are scattered through its pages, but we look in vain for a condensed statement of the gist of the author's thoughts. So far as we can see, his philosophy centres in these sentences (p. 125): "What is God doing with us? What is the ideal toward which the immanent life is moving through us?" The answer is: "Suffering is intended to make men think. Behind all experience moves one great aspiring power developing and perfecting the world. Wherein man is adjusted to it, he is already free from suffering; but wherein he still acts ignorantly he suffers, and is sure to be in conflict until he understands the law of growth."

*The Drama of the Apocalypse*, by En Dansk, "being meditations on life and immortality," is a new attempt at putting sense and meaning into the Revelation of St. John. To do so, the author says, "it is necessary to transport ourselves in thought to the times in which the author lived, and try to understand the belief and hopes which animated this pioneer of a new faith." He rejects the old-time methods of interpreting the Apocalypse, his own procedure being chiefly psychological and a sort of endeavor "to enter into the mind, expectations, and intellectual environment of the Seer of Patmos." The author has eloquently and vividly described the physical, social, and mental environment of the apocalyptic rhapsodist, and his book will no doubt serve to help many to a rational insight into this enigmatic production of early Christianity. The author does not neglect to emphasise the spiritual importance of the Apocalypse as a symbolisation of the person of Christ and his life-work. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, Paternoster Square. 1894. Pages, 241.)

Mr. Charles W. French, Principal of the Hyde Park High School of Chicago, has just edited and arranged for school use some appropriate *Selections from the Works of Robert Browning*. (New York: A. Lovell & Co. Pages, 112. Price, 50 cents.) The Selections include Saul, Ben Ezra, Pheidippides, Abt Vogler, A Grammarian's Funeral, and The Dead Pan. The editor has written a brief expository and biographical introduction giving analyses of the larger poems, and appended explanatory footnotes to difficult and obscure passages.

Mr. D. Ostrander has written a little book on *Social Growth and Stability, a Consideration of the Factors of Modern Society and Their Relation to the Character of the Coming State*, in which are expressed upon the whole correct and adequate ideas of the social and ethical problems. The book, however, is unsystematic and excursive, and the author's grasp of many questions somewhat naïve. (Chicago: S. C. Griggs & Company. 1895. Pages, 191. Price, \$1.00.)

Dr. Charles Borgeaud's *Adoption and Amendment of Constitutions in Europe and America*, which received the *Prix Rossi* awarded in 1893 by the Faculty of Law of the University of Paris, and is favorably known in juridical circles abroad, has been translated into English by Prof. C. D. Hazen and Mr. John M. Vincent. (Macmillan & Co. Pages, 353. Price, \$2.00.) The present study aims to exhibit the process of constitution-making in States, unlike England, which admit of isolated treatment and supply materials for the construction of a general theory. In the author's view this end can be attained only by a clear understanding of the general principles which underlie the various constitutions, and for this in turn a historical study of the fundamental law of the different nations is necessary. He has sought in this work to show the possibilities of such an investigation, examining (1) The Origin, Growth, and Character of Written Constitutions, (2) Royal Charters and Constitutional Compacts (in Germany, Austria, Scandinavia, and the Latin Nations), (3) Democratic Institutions (in America, France, and Switzerland). What we have in Dr. Borgeaud's work is a brief synoptic view of the *historical development* of the world's constitutions as organic wholes, and not a bare and tedious transcription of their texts. He has compressed a mass of unwieldy material into a very small compass.

Books so elucidative and interesting as *Outlines of English Industrial History*, by W. Cunningham and Ellen A. McArthur, are rare. The authors recount in simple and concise language the main facts of English industrial development, under such heads as Immigrants to Britain, Physical Conditions, The Towns, The Manors, The National Economic Life, Agriculture, Labor and Capital, etc. It is surprising to see what light this little historical sketch throws on modern economic problems. The book is one we can fairly recommend to backward students and beginners of economic history. (Macmillan & Co.: New York and London. Pages, 274. Price, \$1.50)

## NOTES.

Mrs. Mary M. Higgins, the Principal of *Mussaeus School and Orphanage, Cinnamon Gardens, Colombo, Ceylon*, has with the help of American friends, for three years and a half, devoted her whole time and energy to the education of Singhalese girls. She has built a little hut covered with a palm-leaf roof, in which she lives with twenty-one girls, and there she also keeps school. She receives orphans free of charge. A prominent Singhalese gentleman has donated a suitable site for a better equipped school house, but there are no means to build it. Mrs. Higgins writes to *Dr. Mary Weeks Burnett of Chicago*: "If you could see our dear little brown-faced, bright-eyed girls and could watch their progress in school, I know you would feel that it is worth while to devote oneself to their welfare. I venture to ask you if you will help us to build a home for them. It may be you know among your rich patients some one who would lend us a helping hand. *Dr. Alice B. Stockham of 277, W. Madison St.*, of your city is our good friend and can give any information you need about our work." We are informed that Mrs. Higgins has given the little she has herself for the cause of her life, and has been backed with substantial help and good will by American and German friends, among the latter of whom is the Countess Wachtmeister, who visited Colombo en route to Australia.

The Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle has just announced a very elaborate special course in Jewish history and literature, under the direction of Prof. Richard Gottheil of Columbia College, New York. The syllabus of the course, a copy of which we have received, forms a valuable guide to the study of Hebrew doctrines and culture. Persons interested may address Henry Berkowitz, P. O. Box 825, Philadelphia, Pa.

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